

As President Kennedy said of those who have served: "As we express our gratitude, we must never forget that the highest appreciation is not to utter words, but to live by them."

Let's show our veterans our gratitude by addressing housing insecurity and passing this legislation today, as well as the underlying bill sponsored by Representative GALLEG0.

Mr. BOST. Madam Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to gentleman from Kansas (Mr. MANN), my good friend.

Mr. MANN. Madam Speaker, I rise today to highlight veterans bills before the House floor.

I appreciate the opportunity to first highlight legislation that Representative PAPPAS and I introduced, aimed at helping veteran homelessness.

H.R. 2878 and the Affordable Housing for Homeless Veterans Act of 2021 would increase the number of affordable housing options to help reduce the recent uptick in veteran homelessness due to the ongoing pandemic.

Our job on the House Veterans' Affairs Committee is to ensure that we are taking care of and doing right by our veterans. This legislation works to do just that. Curbing veterans' homelessness and ensuring our Nation's heroes are not without shelter for themselves and their families is a top priority for me. There are over 37,000 veterans experiencing homelessness in America. This is not acceptable for our veterans, and we must be part of the solution.

I was pleased to see the Department of VA and the Department of Housing and Urban Development align efforts to join forces to find ways to end veteran homelessness. One of the priorities mentioned by VA and HUD is increasing the supply and access to affordable housing.

My legislation reauthorizes and amends the program that allows the Secretary of VA to sell, lease, rent or donate a home which was acquired by VA because a veteran defaulted on their VA-guaranteed home loan to a public housing authority, grant and per diem provider, or a Supportive Services for Veterans Families service provider.

The public housing authority or providers could then use these homes to shelter other veterans and their families who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless.

By reauthorizing this program and removing some burdensome regulations from the old program, the number of affordable housing options in higher cost areas will increase and provide relief to veterans who have limited affordable housing options.

I was pleased this legislation received bipartisan support from my colleagues on the committee, as well as many members not on the committee. This broad support shows a willingness by this House of Representatives to implement these impactful changes for our veterans across the country.

I also had the opportunity to speak with VA Secretary McDonough when

he visited VA facilities in Kansas. I spoke to him about the Affordable Housing for Homeless Veterans Act, and he was encouraged about the work we were doing in the committee to help veterans. I look forward to my continued partnership with Secretary McDonough and the VA.

I also want to quickly highlight another piece of legislation I introduced along with Representative LAMB, the VA Equal Employment Counseling Modernization Act.

□ 1515

This legislation removes burdensome regulations by simply removing the cap on the number of full-time employees at the Department of Veterans Affairs who provide equal opportunity employment counseling. It is a small, incremental change, but changes like this help the VA get our veterans into jobs quickly and ensure we are giving them the best care and guidance possible.

I thank Chairman TAKANO and Ranking Member BOST for allowing me to speak on behalf of the Affordable Housing for Veterans Act. I look forward to passing these pieces of legislation and continuing to work with everyone to help veterans.

Mr. TAKANO. Madam Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from the State of Hawaii (Mr. KAHELE).

Mr. KAHELE. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman from California for yielding me time.

Madam Speaker, today, I rise to speak in favor of H.R. 2878, the bipartisan Native VetSuccess at Tribal Colleges and Universities Pilot Program, which includes a bill that I co-lead with my esteemed colleague from Iowa's Second Congressional District, Congresswoman MILLER-MEEKS, the VET TEC Enhancement Act.

In our Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines, and Coast Guard, our veterans and their families have sacrificed so much to protect our Nation and keep our country whole. We owe them our thanks, we owe them our respect, but most importantly, we owe them our support as they transition back into civilian life once their service is over.

The Veteran Employment Through Technical Education Courses, or VET TEC, is a 5-year pilot program that allows eligible veterans to use GI Bill-style benefits to attend innovative job training programs and prepare them for future employment in the technology industry. Our bill would expand funding of this program from \$45 million to \$125 million a year, allowing more of our men and women in uniform to enroll each year.

The VET TEC program is highly popular and has a 90 percent completion rate, giving our veterans the tools they need to gain meaningful employment in well-paying jobs. No servicemember who has taken the oath to protect and defend our country should be left behind in today's 21st century workforce. I am proud to co-lead this important

legislation, and I look forward to its passage and benefit to America's servicemembers. Mahalo.

Mr. BOST. Madam Speaker, I encourage my colleagues to support this bill, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. TAKANO. Madam Speaker, I have no further speakers. In closing, I ask all my colleagues to join me in passing this important piece of legislation, H.R. 2878, as amended, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. TAKANO) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 2878, as amended.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the yeas have it.

Mr. ROSENDALE. Madam Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to section 3(s) of House Resolution 8, the yeas and nays are ordered.

Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this motion are postponed.

#### DIRECTING SECRETARY OF VETERANS AFFAIRS TO SUBMIT A REPORT ON USE OF CAMERAS IN MEDICAL CENTERS OF DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

Mr. TAKANO. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 1510) to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to submit to Congress a report on the use of cameras in the medical centers of the Department of Veterans Affairs, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 1510

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

#### SECTION 1. REPORT ON USE OF CAMERAS IN MEDICAL FACILITIES OF THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.

(a) REPORT REQUIRED.—Not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, in collaboration with the Office of Operations, Security, and Preparedness of the Department of Veterans Affairs, the Veterans Health Administration, and the Office of Construction and Facilities Management of the Department, shall submit to the Committees on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate and the House of Representatives a report analyzing the policies, use, and maintenance of cameras deployed by the Department for patient safety and law enforcement at medical facilities of the Department.

(b) ELEMENTS.—The report required by subsection (a) shall include the following:

(1) A comprehensive review of the policies and procedures of the Department regarding the use and maintenance of cameras with respect to the following:

(A) Patient safety, including—

(i) an analysis of how cameras are used to monitor staff and patients;

(ii) an analysis of the specific units within medical facilities in which the use of cameras is prioritized to protect patient safety;

(iii) an analysis of the procedures regarding the positioning of cameras;

(iv) an analysis of the extent to which cameras monitor locations where drugs are stored to ensure that drugs are accounted for, and an assessment of whether this is a widely used practice; and

(v) an analysis of the actions taken to preserve and protect patient privacy.

(B) Law enforcement of medical facilities of the Department, including—

(i) how exterior cameras are used;

(ii) how interior cameras are used; and

(iii) an analysis of locations, interior and exterior, in which camera use is prioritized.

(2) Recommendations of the Secretary to improve patient safety and law enforcement, including—

(A) the placement and maintenance of cameras;

(B) the storage of data from such cameras;

(C) the authority of supervisors at medical facilities of the Department to review recordings from cameras;

(D) the number of staff required to monitor live footage from cameras at each medical facility of the Department;

(E) the funding necessary to address shortfalls with respect to cameras and the specific uses for such funding;

(F) any additional actions required to preserve and protect patient privacy; and

(G) such other matters the Secretary determines appropriate.

(c) CAMERA DEFINED.—In this section, the term “camera” means any video camera used in a medical facility of the Department of Veterans Affairs for purposes of patient safety or law enforcement, but does not include cameras used solely by the Inspector General of the Department of Veterans Affairs to assist in criminal investigations conducted by the Inspector General.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from California (Mr. TAKANO) and the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. BOST) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California.

#### GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. TAKANO. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and insert extraneous material on H.R. 1510, as amended.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from California?

There was no objection.

Mr. TAKANO. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 1510, the Veterans' Camera Reporting Act, introduced by Representative MCKINLEY of West Virginia.

This bill, as amended by the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs, requires VA to submit a report to Congress analyzing the Department's use and maintenance of video cameras for the purposes of patient safety and law enforcement within all of its medical facilities.

Last Tuesday, a nursing assistant who was formerly employed at a VA hospital in West Virginia was sentenced to seven consecutive life sentences plus 20 years after she pleaded guilty to murdering seven veterans and assaulting an eighth veteran with intent to commit murder. She took insulin that she was not authorized to ad-

minister, and she injected it into veterans who did not need it, killing all eight of them.

Following the sentencing last week, the VA Office of the Inspector General issued a report identifying numerous deficiencies in patient care and failures in VA oversight at the facility where these murders occurred. Among other things, the OIG found that there were no cameras in the ward where these events occurred, nor in the medication room where the insulin was stored, and there were no locks or other mechanisms for monitoring access to medication carts where insulin was also kept.

There are no words to adequately express the horror and sorrow we feel about the heinous crimes committed against these veterans. We cannot imagine the pain the families have endured since evidence of these murders came to light nearly 3 years ago. We can only hope that last week's sentencing will help the victims' families begin to heal and to find a sense of closure.

In Congress, we have a responsibility to help ensure that VA never allows something like this to happen again. Now, as an initial step, we need to better understand how VA uses video cameras for monitoring patient safety and physical security within its medical facilities. To that end, H.R. 1510 will require VA to submit a report summarizing how cameras are used to monitor staff and patients, the units within which cameras are prioritized, and how cameras are used to monitor drug storage. The report also must include recommendations on improving the use of cameras at VA, including whether the Department needs additional resources to install cameras for patient safety and law enforcement purposes.

This bill will require VA's report to encompass all of its medical facilities nationwide. Drug diversion, assaults, harassment, suicides, and other patient safety incidents can occur at any VA medical facility, not just hospitals. VA operates more than 1,000 inpatient and outpatient facilities across the country. Congress needs a complete picture of the extent to which cameras are used across VA so that we can better assist the Department in addressing any shortfalls.

Madam Speaker, I urge all Members to join me in approving this important bill.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. BOST. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 1510, as amended, the Veterans' Camera Reporting, or the VCR, Act. The VCR Act would require VA to assess how cameras are used for patient safety and law enforcement purposes in VA medical center facilities. It would also require VA to report to Congress about how camera use could be improved to make VA safer and more responsive to veterans' needs.

I was proud to introduce this bill with Congressman DAVID MCKINLEY of West Virginia and others earlier this

year. We drafted it in response to a series of incidents across the country where missing or malfunctioning cameras played a role in serious lapses. In some of those incidents, veterans' lives were lost. Those tragedies have no place in the VA healthcare system. The VCR Act will help make sure they will never happen again.

Most importantly, it will help ensure that veterans are safe seeking the care that they have earned. The VCR Act is a bipartisan bill. It is supported by the VA and the veterans service organizations, including The VFW and the Wounded Warrior Project. I am grateful for that support.

Madam Speaker, I encourage all of my colleagues to support this bill, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. TAKANO. Madam Speaker, I have no further speakers. In closing, I ask all my colleagues to join me in passing H.R. 1510, which cleared the committee unanimously. I can see no reason why any Member would vote against this bill.

Madam Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. TAKANO) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 1510, as amended.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

Mr. ROSENDALE. Madam Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to section 3(s) of House Resolution 8, the yeas and nays are ordered.

Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this motion are postponed.

#### ESTABLISHING VETERANS ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY AND TRANSITION ADMINISTRATION

Mr. TAKANO. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 2494) to amend title 38, United States Code, to establish in the Department the Veterans Economic Opportunity and Transition Administration, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 2494

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

#### SECTION 1. ESTABLISHMENT OF VETERANS ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY AND TRANSITION ADMINISTRATION.

(a) VETERANS ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY AND TRANSITION ADMINISTRATION.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Part V of title 38, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following new chapter:

#### “CHAPTER 80—VETERANS ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY AND TRANSITION ADMINISTRATION

“Sec.